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THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL :

A MONTHLY RECORD AND REVIEW

Devoted to the interests of Worship Music in the
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
OUR COMPETITIONS	83
MUSIC IN PUBLIC WORSHIP	84
LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY	85
MUSIC AT CHARLES STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL, CARDIFF	86
PASSING NOTES	87
OUR RISING SINGERS:— Miss Kate Cherry	88
MR. GLADSTONE'S LETTER	89
OUR CONTEMPORARIES	90
NONCONFORMIST CHURCH ORGANS:— Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Rhyl	91
FARNHAM WESLEYAN CIRCUIT CHOIR FESTIVAL	91
EXPRESSION	92
RETIREMENT OF DR. E. J. HOPKINS	93
ECHOES FROM THE CHURCHES:— Metropolitan	93
Provincial	93
Colonial	94
CORRESPONDENCE:— Tonic Sol-fa Organists	95
How to Prepare Choral Music	95
NEW MUSIC	96
STACCATO NOTES	96
TO CORRESPONDENTS	96
ACCIDENTALS	96

All Communications for the Editor should be sent to him at 20, Clifton Crescent, Folkestone. Orders for any of our publications should be sent to the publishing office, 44, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

Our Competitions.

THE subject "What has Music done for Christianity?" does not appear to have inspired our readers, for no article has reached us which we consider deserves the prize. Reluctantly, therefore, we withhold the prize.

We offer a prize of two guineas for the best Organ Fantasia on the tune "Gopsal" (Handel), No. 158 in the Congregational Church Hymnal. The following are the conditions:—

1. MSS. must be sent to the Editor, at 20, Clifton Crescent, Folkestone, on or before June 30th.
2. Each MS. must be marked with a *nom-de-plume*, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope, containing the name and address of the composer.
3. Compositions should not exceed five pages of the *Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries*.
4. Unsuccessful MSS. will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent us for that purpose.
5. We reserve the right to withhold the prize

should we consider there is no MS. of sufficient merit.

6. Our decision in all matters relating to the competition shall be final.

On page 89 will be found a letter on Church Music from Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Minshall, written just before this JOURNAL was founded. It will be read with melancholy interest at the present time.

The Annual Festival of the Nonconformist Choir Union will be held at the Crystal Palace on Saturday, June 18th. In the early part of the day choral competitions will take place. At four o'clock the concert on the Handel Orchestra will commence. Choirs from London and from many parts of the provinces will combine and form a chorus nearly 4,000 strong. The choral pieces will include Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer," Gounod's "By Babylon's Wave," and other popular pieces. The Crystal Palace orchestra will join the N.C.U. orchestra for the occasion, and besides accompanying several of the pieces will play two selections. Miss Kate Cove, the well-known vocalist, will be the soloist. We trust our readers within reach of the Palace will make a point of being present, and thus encourage the movement. We would specially ask every choir-master in the metropolitan district to get his minister to announce the festival from the pulpit on Sunday, June 12th.

Mr. Sankey has paid a flying visit to England, and was announced to sing at several of the May Meetings. Many people were looking forward to hearing him once again, and thus refreshing happy memories of years ago. But unhappily the war between the United States and Spain made it prudent for him to return home earlier than he intended. No doubt this was a great disappointment to many.

It is interesting to note that some of the Religious Societies now find music an attractive feature at their annual meetings. At the Missionary Meeting of the United Free Methodist Society a choir of about 400 voices sang several anthems with marked effect. Miss Maud Snell also gave some solos.

At the ninety-ninth annual meeting of the Religious Tract Society a choir of about 300 voices, conducted by Mr. E. Minshall, gave a very effective rendering of "Hear My Prayer" (Mendelssohn) and several choruses by Handel and Mendelssohn. Miss Bessie Spells was the soloist, and Mr. Fountain Meen accompanied with his well-known skill.

We are requested to state that Mr. Balding, the Hon. Secretary of the London Baptist Choir Union has received a very cordial letter from Mr. A. H. Baynes, Hon. Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, expressing the warmest thanks of the Committee for the excellent singing at the recent anniversary services at Exeter Hall and

elsewhere. As it is impossible to directly convey these thanks to the three hundred ladies and gentlemen who formed the choir they are asked to accept them through this channel.

Music in Public Worship.

AN APPEAL TO METHODISTS.

By C. J. DALE.

A Paper read before the London Wesleyan Methodist Council.

(Concluded from page 69.)

THE STATUS OF THE CHOIR.

I THINK it is important also to be careful in the selection of vocalists who are not only able to sing, but who have a due sense of the sacred and important character of their work. The formation of the choir into a small society is, in my opinion, most helpful to the exercise of proper discipline, and makes it possible, under a code of rules judiciously framed, to provide for the process of selection to which I have referred.

I would then plead for a more definite recognition of the leaders of our choral worship as a responsible body of church-workers. I venture to express the opinion that their devotion to duty and their influence upon the worship of God's house entitles them to be ranked with other bodies of Christian workers, such as Sunday-school teachers, class-leaders and the like. I have often heard the question argued—Shall we make a rule that all our teachers must be members of Society? And I am of opinion that every argument in favour of such a rule as applied to Sunday-school teachers applies with equal, if not with greater force, to the members of church choirs. Nothing helps the proceedings of a Sunday evening prayer-meeting more effectively than the presence in full force of the church choir, and at the sacramental service it is delightful to see the members of the choir remain in their places to lead the singing, and to join together at the Lord's Table. As an old Sunday-school worker, I was delighted with the legislation which gave the Sunday-school superintendent a seat in the quarterly meeting. I think it would be a further step in the right direction to accord the same privilege to a representative of our church choirs.

RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICES OF CHOIRS.

I know we are over-scheduled, but I would like the strength and efficiency of our church choirs to be a subject of conversation for a few minutes in our District Synods.

If I knew the minister who is charged with the preparation of the next address of Conference to the Methodist people I would whisper this in his ear, "Say one word of appreciation and encouragement to the leaders of our song, remind them of their duties and privileges, of the special dangers of their position, and of the temptations which beset them, and exhort them to consecrate their gifts and talents to the service of the Master." I know what the effect of such a message would be. Only a few weeks ago, in a choir with which I am acquainted, the choir-master brought up a resolution from the trustees' meeting expressing the high

appreciation of that body of the valuable and efficient services rendered by the choir during the past year, and recognising the importance of the work they were doing for the church. Up jumped a sturdy member of the bass division, who said, "Mr. Choir-master, I have been a member of this choir for fifteen years, and this is the first time such a resolution has been sent to us; I am sure we shall do our duty more cheerfully and faithfully because of it. I move that our thanks be sent to the trustees for their kind resolution." But what would be said if during Conference the question should be found on the Agenda, "Is the work of our church choirs successful and satisfactory?" and the Rev. Dr. Stephenson, who understands this subject so well, should rise to answer?

This business has a very serious side. Choirs have not been treated with sufficient seriousness. It is accepted without question that musical people are touchy, sensitive, jealous, quarrelsome and they are treated accordingly. After a fairly long experience I frankly bear witness that this idea is greatly exaggerated. I admit that such people *may* be found in choirs, and even enthroned on organ stools, but not in any larger proportion than is found in other communities of Christian workers, and my point is that whatever is unsatisfactory would be very greatly modified, and in time removed, by the uplifting of the church choir into a position of consecrated Christian service.

Dr. Stephenson could tell of the power of music in the services of our church, and of its exceptional value in his own special work. Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, Mr. Wakerley and others could tell of its charm in the work of the London Mission, and if Conference would send a word of cheer and of spiritual counsel to the choirs of Methodism the effect would be stimulating and encouraging in the highest degree. May I suggest that periodical meetings of choir and congregation for the combined practice of new tunes, chants, services, &c., would be most helpful, and would have the advantage of infusing life and interest into the somewhat dreary and monotonous proceedings of an average week evening service. I also advocate the formation of a union of circuit choirs with an occasional festival after the manner of the diocesan festivals of the Established Church.

DO CONGREGATIONS SING?

There is one weak point in our congregational singing which I have many times noticed, and that is that in many cases the people do not sing. But I have observed even when the sentiment is inspiring, and the tune is familiar and popular, that some people rise with apparent reluctance about half way through the first or second line, their eyes wander about the building with an expression which proves that their attention is not fixed. Such people remain seated during the singing of an anthem or a sacred solo, and these are the people who call such exercises a performance. It is they who by their indifference convert that which should be an act of worship into a meaningless formality. Many plans might be suggested as a remedy for this state of things.

I commend to our ministers the idea of occasionally introducing the hymn or a new tune by calling attention

to its leading features, or to some historic incident with which so many of our hymns and tunes are associated. Let them begin by studying carefully the series of articles now appearing in *The Methodist Recorder* on the Latin hymns in the Wesleyan hymn-book, a subject which is treated in such an interesting and masterly manner by Rev. F. W. Macdonald. The occasional singing of one verse of a hymn by a solo voice, or by a quartette, or by the full choir, arrests the attention, quickens the interest, and renders the psalmody more enjoyable.

A REVISED HYMN-BOOK WANTED.

Next to an awakened interest, and that which will tend very much to the awakening, is wanted something else, about which I desire to speak very carefully. I must say, with confidence and with all earnestness, we want a revised book of hymns and tunes. I do not pretend to debate this question with those who understand much better than I the sentiments and requirements of our Connexion generally, but I speak from prolonged and practical acquaintance with the subject, with some knowledge of the opinions expressed by many influential members of our congregations, and on the authority of many ministers who are well able to form a wise and sound judgment on the question. Supplements and collections for various special occasions do not meet the case. What we want is a complete book, not larger than the present one, but from which shall be entirely eliminated all the hymns which experience has proved are not suited to the requirements of modern public worship, and substituting those which during the past twenty-five years have impressed their character and value upon the Christian Church. We ought to be abreast of such works as *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the *Congregational Church Hymnal*, the *Primitive Methodist Hymn and Tune-book*, *United Methodist Free Church Hymn-book*, and others. Indeed, we ought to lead the way, and to anticipate so far as that may be possible the demands of the coming twenty-five years.

I know how seriously this question is effected by economical and financial considerations, but I feel sure if the spiritual interests of our Church are fully recognised all other important questions could be brought into line. What a grand thing it would be to inaugurate the new century with a new Methodist Hymn and Tune-book worthy alike of the age and the Methodist Church. This subject is well worthy the attention and the action of this Council.

MUSIC FOR THE CHILDREN.

I have not referred to the children. Fortunately primary education in music, as in other departments of knowledge, is now well attended to in our elementary day schools and in many of our Sunday-schools, whilst our numerous choral and orchestral societies provide abundant means for the higher cultivation of the divine art. This is one of the reasons why the question has assumed such an urgent character in its relation to public worship. I think the growing popularity of Sunday sacred concerts is an object-lesson to the Churches of which we ought to take careful note, bearing in mind that music is, and always has been, the handmaid of religion, and that it attains its very

highest and purest development when consecrated to the service of the Christian Church.

May I suggest that the new book to which I have referred should embody a number of children's hymns carefully selected for introduction into our ordinary Sunday services, and that one such hymn should always be taken in the course of the Sunday morning service. I believe that would be acceptable to the adult members of our congregations as to the children themselves. It would help to keep up the memory and the illusions of youthfulness to which we all cling so tenaciously, and it might possibly touch some hearts which would not otherwise be affected.

You have all heard how rugged, stern, unsentimental Thomas Carlyle was caught one day with his ear pressed closely to the wall that he might distinguish more clearly the voices of the children singing in an adjoining school. In conversation with Sir John Stainer some time ago I ventured to ask which of his many contributions to sacred music had impressed him most deeply. Without hesitation he replied that, one Sunday morning in the country he came unexpectedly upon a village Sunday-school, and listening, heard the children singing with evident enjoyment a tune which he had written. Never at any time had he been more affected by his own music.

I do not expect sudden and violent changes, but I am anxious that we should be fully alive to the importance and urgency of this subject. According to the means at our command let us strive for constant and steady improvement. The Bishop of London has spoken eloquently and impressively on this question in a recent address before the London Church Choir Association, and with his words I close:—

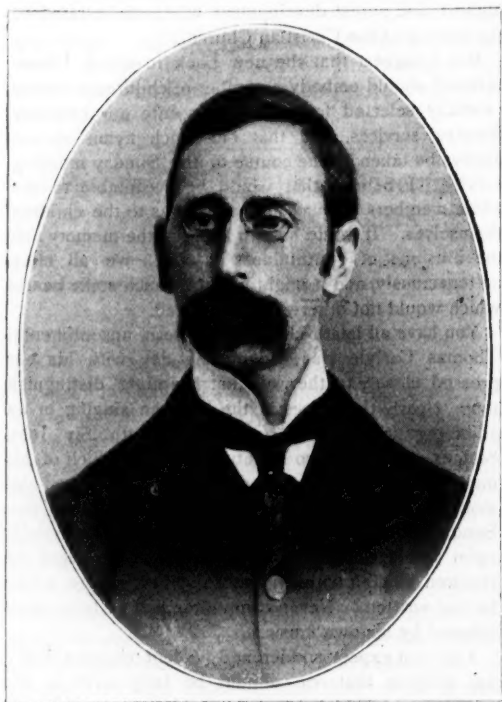
Music, the most subtle, the most intimate of all the arts, pursuing thoughts beyond words, pursuing expression to its very furthest limits, suggesting what cannot be said, indicating, holding forth the forms of something which we receive, which we assimilate at once, which we recognise as appealing to the highest part of us, but yet which we cannot define, which we cannot express, which we cannot report—that is

THE FUNCTION OF MUSIC.

and surely it is in the praise of God, in the setting forth of God's perfection, that music finds its highest object, because it must always be so that good music is sacred music, and that all music in proportion as it is good becomes sacred, because it must perforce, by the very laws of its nature, lead men beyond the things of this world into the things of that ideal world where God is and God is alone."

LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY.

THE sixth Musical Festival was held in Essex Hall on April 30th. In the afternoon a choir competition took place, Mr. E. Minshall being the adjudicator. Choirs from Blackfriars, Hackney, Highgate, Islington, Kentish Town, Limehouse, Newington Green, Stepney, and Essex Church put in an appearance. Each choir sang the test piece, and a second piece of its own selection. The first place was awarded to Highgate, and the second place to Essex Church. In the evening a concert was given by the united choirs. Part songs were excellently rendered under the able conductorship of Mr. F. W. Turner, two of the pieces being encored. The Misses Lawrence, Miss Toye, Miss Cooper, and Miss Effie C. Turner contributed vocal items, which were much appreciated. The President, Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., presided.



Music at Charles Street Congregational Chapel, Cardiff.

THE flourishing town of Cardiff is now one of the important centres of industrial activity in the United Kingdom. There is a bustling about in the place not seen in any other Welsh town certainly, and only here and there in England and Scotland. It was at Eastertide when we were there, and we were surprised to find at that holiday season the town so exceedingly busy.

The religious element is strong in Cardiff as it is in almost every part of Wales. Churches and chapels of various denominations are numerous. In most cases there are Welsh and English chapels in each sect. The English do not understand the Welsh language; and the Welsh, though most of them probably understand English, cannot listen with profit to an English service. The Congregationalists have, in the town and suburbs, ten English chapels and six Welsh chapels.

We had the pleasure of visiting Charles Street Chapel on Easter Sunday. It is not attractive outside, but very comfortable inside and neatly decorated. It is an oblong building (seating about 650 persons) with a large chancel at one end in which is placed the organ and choir on a raised floor. The choir occupy seats (two rows on either side of the chancel) facing each other. Happily the arch is very lofty and allows the tone of organ and choir to travel well into the church. The pulpit is placed on the left-hand side of the arch.

The church was formed in 1853. The present minister is the Rev. J. Williamson, M.A., a man

of great intellectual power and refinement and of much influence in the locality. He has been pastor of the church for twelve years. His predecessor held the pastorate for twenty-two years, so evidently pastor and flock get on well together at Charles Street.

The organist, Mr. Sydney Fifoot (whose portrait we give) is a well-known local musician. He first became connected with the chapel in 1872 when, as a youth, he took the services for a few weeks while the church was without an organist. Though he knew very little about an organ, he practised diligently, and in January, 1873, he was appointed regular organist, a position he has filled with credit to himself and satisfaction to the church ever since. In 1894 the church presented him with a service of plate value sixty pounds. For five years Mr. Fifoot was conductor of the Cardiff Orchestral Society of eighty instrumentalists. Since his change of residence to Penarth, a seaside suburb, he conducts the Penarth Musical Society, which consists of about 100 voices. They performed *The Creation* and *Sleeping Beauty* last season. Mr. Fifoot is enthusiastic as well as thoroughly capable, and has rendered admirable service to Charles Street and neighbouring churches.

The choir is an excellent one. It consists of twenty-six members, many of them having been members for twenty years. Besides giving careful attention to the usual Sunday work, they give an annual concert, when *Athalie* (Mendelssohn), all Mendelssohn's setting of the Psalms, and works by Spohr and Gounod amongst other things have been given.

The organ is not very modern. It has nine stops on the great and nine on the swell. The tone is fairly good. Mr. Fifoot makes the most of it and plays with sound judgment.

On the occasion of our visit there was a very good congregation, and likewise a good choir, although it was holiday time. The hymns were sung heartily and with excellent taste. Clearly the choir have been well trained, especially in the matter of expression and phrasing. The Congregational Church Hymnal is used, and the rendering of hymn 177 to tune 96 struck us as being exceedingly good. The chanting, too, was bright and crisp. There was no anthem, however. We found on enquiry that an anthem in which the congregation can join is used at one service each Sunday, and a more elaborate composition is sung by the choir alone during the offertory. We were glad to hear that the congregation are heartily in favour of good music, and they show a lively interest in Mr. Fifoot's work. This is encouraging to him and the choir, no doubt. Practically he has a free hand and every one seems glad to support him. That is as it should be.

We observed one thing at Charles Street not very general in our churches. Immediately before the sermon there was silent prayer for a few moments, ending with the choir and congregation chanting the Lord's Prayer. This seemed a very suitable preparation for the earnest and eloquent Easter sermon which followed.

Good work is being done at Charles Street in every department of religious work. The "cause" is flourishing, and church, congregation, deacons, pastor, choir, and organist all seem to be one united and happy family. Long may it continue!

Passing Notes.

AN alarming discovery has been made: it has been clearly proved by scientific demonstration that physical development follows the practice of wind instruments. The unprincipled individual who in the dead hours of the night wakes the echoes with the wild wails of a cornet from his open window seeks melody. Generally speaking, he fails to find it, but it seems that he does find a larger chest. How has that been proved? you ask. Well, a band of forty members were photographed recently. Incidentally the players were measured, and in the measurement a queer thing came out. The wind-instrument men had all a greater chest capacity than the string men, and were, moreover, as a rule, in better health. The trombone player came first, with a chest circumference of forty-five inches and an expansion of five inches. If you don't play the trombone you can compare these measurements with your own. My doctor tells me (I exact information of this kind by way of discount) that the average male is very much below this mark, the circumference being generally about thirty-six. However, that is an aside. The aforesaid trombone man, I read, "smiled blandly, remarking at the same time that his instrument was undoubtedly the cause of his chest superiority. "Here, then, is the newest Koch cure. But tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon, lest the Philistines, in the form of weak-chested musical enthusiasts, should come down upon us with the cult of the trombone. Dr. Hullah once declared that all first efforts at learning the fiddle should be made on the top of the highest hill, at the extremity of the most desolate plain, or in the recesses of the deepest cavern in the neighbourhood. A sumptuary enactment of that kind will require to be made if the practice of the trombone should prevail. But perhaps the trombone will not triumph just yet awhile. Men, as a certain Dey of Algiers remarked after watching a trio of trombonists at the opera, could hardly swallow so much brass without hurting themselves.

The American editors are a "live" set of men. One of them, hearing that Mons. Guilmant was about to tour the States, asked the eminent organist for an article, and the result is a very interesting disquisition upon organ-music and organ-playing. Mons. Guilmant seems to write almost as well as he plays, which, you will admit, is rather a rare distinction for an organist. As a matter of course he has a good deal to say about Bach. I remember once asking him why he did not play Mendelssohn more frequently. "Ah," he said, "I prefer Bach," which was not a sufficient answer. Most of us prefer Bach, but some of us like Mendelssohn too. In this American article he now remarks that for pure organ music

Bach is, and probably always will be, the greatest of all composers. He admits that even with all the modern mechanical appliances that have been attached to the organ, Bach's works are still very difficult—perhaps the most difficult of organ compositions. He must have been as great an organist as he was a composer. That he should have been able to play upon the imperfect organ of his day works so exacting in technique as his own, the French organist regards as simply marvellous. It is in the chorales which he wrote for the organ that Guilmant finds the heart of Bach. These, as he puts it, "combine in a wonderful degree exact musical science with the deepest feeling, and are grand objects of study." Of course we all know by this time that Mons. Guilmant does not approve of "arrangements" of orchestral works for the organ. In this article he speaks out very plainly on the matter, characterising the attempt to reproduce the orchestral colour of the original scoring as "deplorable enough." But surely we may play arrangements of orchestral music without being under the absolute necessity of endeavouring to reproduce the original orchestral colouring. I am more in accord with Mons. Guilmant when he condemns the too prevalent use of the vibrating stops, such as the Voix Célestes and the Vox Humana. Too often when these effects are really called for they do not make the desired impression, simply because they have been employed so much when they were *not* called for.

By the way, speaking of Bach, it may be well to direct the attention of organists to an excellent article by Mr. Franklin Peterson on the registration of Bach's organ works, which appears in the May *Musical Record*. The vexed question of registration is very much in the air just now. Government has been forced to take it up, and it is rumoured that even musicians sigh after the legislation and privileges which have been granted to plumbers and others. It is a difficult question, but not any more difficult than the registration of Bach. To put the matter briefly, Mr. Peterson would allow the organist entire freedom in his registration of Bach's works, with one important reservation—that the organist be an artist. He admits that Bach probably did not indulge to any extent in the practice of changing his stops, and that he played his larger compositions with "full organ" throughout; but in admitting this he wants to know how far Bach was hampered by the imperfect mechanism of his instruments. A readily appreciable illustration of the mechanical difficulties may be found in the fact that, in order to couple the manuals, it was necessary in Bach's time to pull the upper manual bodily forward about two inches—an operation requiring both hands. With an instrument of that kind you cannot always be changing your stops, even if you have the number and variety of stops to make it worth changing, which Bach certainly did not always have. In considering the registration of Bach, Mr. Peterson divides the organ works into four classes: Those, like the choral preludes, which practically admit of no doubt as to their registration; the slow movements, which offer opportunity for variety and quasi-orchestral treatment; the fugues; and, lastly, the great fantasias, toccatas, etc. With regard to the fugues—the most

difficult question of all—he is in favour of the tradition which enjoins the full organ throughout, except in some instances where an entire episode can be transferred to a second manual with good effect. Of course he allows that many of the fugues seem to invite more delicate treatment, for example the C minor, the small E minor, the small G minor, etc. For my own part I am more inclined to the modern school, which contends with great show of reason that as the interest of a fugue continually increases, so the volume of tone should be increased from time to time, until the *fortissimo* gives added effect to the grand climax. But what is more varied than taste?

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Well, it depends. A certain editor, who shall be nameless, would probably have something not quite orthodox to say upon the text. The genial humorist—he must be a humorist—was apologising the other day for imperfections in his paper on the ground that a boy in the next building had become possessed of a bugle! How I sympathise with the worthy man! His case reminds me of the experience of a recent writer in one of the French monthlies who begged for the indulgence of his readers because while he was writing his article an amiable neighbour was going through the whole of *Faust*—with one finger. There was the musical neighbour in his—more probably in her—most aggravating form. Dr. Holmes says somewhere that the piano is the true humaniser of our time, the medium in which all the wickedness of woman gets absorbed. If he had ever been within daily hearing of the piano through the wall or on the flat above, he would more than likely have found that any wickedness which may have been run off the tips of his neighbour's fingers had got engrained in his own soul. Heine knew better. His view was that the piano is the instrument of martyrdom whereby the present elegant world is racked and tortured for all its affectations. "If only the innocent had not to endure it!" he exclaims, with the fervour of one who has himself suffered. The trouble is that the innocent—the innocent who lives in a flat at any rate—must endure it. The liberty of the subject is not to be interfered with in this land of freedom; and the girl who keeps "a-peggin' into the pianny as if she was vexed at somebody" is as legally secure from interdict as if she were pounding the keys on the top of Snowdon. Well, I suppose we must take out the punishment of our original sin in some way or other. An American humorist says that men pay the penalty every time they shave with a blunt razor. I am inclined to think that the musical neighbour has a mission in that direction, little as she may herself dream of it.

J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

REHEARSALS for the forthcoming Nonconformist Choir Union Festival have been—or will be—held in Glossop, Oldham, Rochdale, Walsall, Coventry, Nottingham, and Ipswich, besides in several districts of London. Judging from the rehearsals already held, there seems every prospect of a very interesting concert on the 18th.

Our Rising Singers.



MISS KATE CHERRY.

THERE is no superabundance of really good church singers. Special qualifications are needed to make a solo truly effective in the sanctuary. Miss Kate Cherry possesses these in a marked degree, and we are very glad to hear that the deacons at Highbury Quadrant Church were able to arrange last autumn for her to take the position of leading soprano there. The wisdom of their choice has been made very apparent by the good services Miss Cherry has rendered during the few months of her appointment; her singing has given great pleasure and satisfaction to the large congregations which assemble there every Sunday, and she has very soon succeeded in establishing herself in the affections of those who are responsible for the welfare of this very popular North London church.

Miss Cherry has a bright soprano voice of excellent quality, which, combined with great musical taste, easily enables her to win the admiration of all her listeners. Whether in an oratorio, on the concert platform, or in the church, she is sure to give the highest satisfaction, her natural unaffected manner materially assisting her in all the engagements she undertakes. Her studies were pursued mainly under the direction of Mrs. A. J. Layton, who is now organist of Dr. Clifford's church at Westbourne Park. Before going to Highbury, Miss Cherry was for several years a member of Markham Square Congregational Church. Her sympathies are, therefore, in accord with the music of the church, which means so much to those who are in the habit of listening to her "Sermons in Song."

Dec. 11: 87

Sir

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter.

Ever since the time of Saint Augustine, I might perhaps say of Saint Paul, the power of music in assisting Christian devotion has been upon records and great schools of Christian musicians have attended and continued the union of the art with worship. I sincerely hope your personal may advance this purpose in the Churches of the Nonconformists; joining the further hope that still science may always continue to be the handmaids of devotion and may ever tend to overshadow it. I remain Sir

Yours obedient & faithful

W. Gladstone

E. Miskin Esq

FACSIMILE OF MR. GLADSTONE'S LETTER.

Our Contemporaries.

To organists at any rate the article of greatest interest in the *Musical Times* will be that on Mr. Henry Willis, the famous organ-builder. Mr. Willis is now all but an octogenarian, yet he is as active and as much devoted to his business as ever. In 1835, when he was fourteen, he was articled to Mr. John Gray, afterwards of Gray and Davison, and it was during his apprenticeship that he invented the special manual and pedal couplers which, although sixty years have elapsed, he still uses in his instruments. While serving his time young Willis was making himself more than an organ builder; he was making himself an organist as well. By-and-bye he was appointed organist of Christ Church, Hoxton, where Clement Scott, the future dramatic critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, was a chorister. In the early fifties Mr. Willis became organist of Hampstead Parish Church. He had built the new organ—then located in the west gallery—and was asked to become the organist. For nearly thirty years he was organist at Islington Chapel-of-Ease, which post he retained until a few years ago. Mr. Willis has thus all along had the great advantage to an organ-builder of being himself an organist. His first success was the organ at Gloucester Cathedral, which he rebuilt in 1847. He got £400 for the job, and he was daring enough to marry. Then he built the great Exhibition organ, and after that the Liverpool Town Hall organ, and his fame was secure. When the latter instrument was finished the committee said to him, "Now that you have built us this organ, who is to play it?" Mr. Willis suggested Best. And not only did he practically get Best appointed to Liverpool, but he had—so we read—previously coached him up in his playing of overtures and other arrangements for the organ. "I egged him on," says the veteran organ-builder, and we all know with what results. Reference is made to Mr. Willis' notable instrument in Union Chapel, Islington. This instrument, as most readers are aware, is remarkable for its position. In order to save the blocking up of a rose window the organ is placed in a concrete chamber below the main floor of the building. The position has shown one great advantage. When the church is crowded and the temperature rises very high, the organ remains dead in tune.—Mr. Joseph Bennett continues his articles on the present aspects of music. This month he deals mainly with the musical critic. Incidentally he remarks that in his own case the time is rapidly passing "which divides many years of activity from the moment in which work will cease." In other words, Mr. Bennett thinks of retiring by-and-bye.

The *Musical Herald's* biographical article deals this month with Mr. George Riseley, of Bristol, who acted as conductor of the music at the opening of the Alexandra Palace on Good Friday. Mr. Riseley is a man of many activities. He began life as a chorister boy, and has had an unbroken connection with Bristol Cathedral of more than forty years. He was articled to J. D. Corfe, the Cathedral organist, one of the celebrated Salisbury family, of whom the elder generation

of musicians at Bristol still speak with bated breath as a type of the old Anglican school. Riseley succeeded Corfe in 1876. He has a poor organ at the cathedral—G manuals, C pedals, and a short swell—which limits his opportunities as an accompanist. The vocal force is eighteen boys and nine men; there is no choir boarding-school. Mr. Riseley rehearses the boys for an hour a day, always using the piano, never an organ or harmonium, both of which at practice do more harm than good. On the subject of organ-playing and teaching he has much to say that is worth noting. "My organ-playing," he says, speaking specially of his recitals at the Colston Hall, "owes much to my orchestral sympathies. A recital organist should be an orchestral conductor as well. For church use let us have pure organ music. Then of course Bach cannot be approached from the orchestral side, nor do we want that line of thought in playing Mendelssohn's six organ sonatas. Never from the first, however, did I confine myself to pure organ music. If I had done so I should have cleared the hall. I maintain that my playing of arrangements of orchestral movements prepared the taste of the Bristol people for the real orchestra. The modern ear, even when listening to the organ, seems to want to get near to the complete and graphic presentation of musical thought which the orchestra gives." There is the case for "arrangements" in a nutshell. Speaking of organ-teaching Mr. Riseley lays special stress on the importance of the first lessons. The great thing is to get the left hand independent of the feet; if this is not done at first it gives immense trouble afterwards. Then, again, you cannot learn the organ by practising the organ only. You must give equal time to the pianoforte. Technic must be learnt and kept up all through the organist's life by exercises, scales, and studies upon the pianoforte. There is no one book that Mr. Riseley recommends or uses. He gathers and makes exercises from many sources. The performer, too, must be prepared for self-denial. Mr. Riseley is fond of athletics and sport, but bicycling, fishing, golfing, shooting, all cramp the hand and stiffen the fingers, and he has to refrain!

Mr. Franklin Peterson's article in the *Musical Record* on the registration of Bach's organ works is referred to in another column. Mr. Peterson is almost as much of a Bach enthusiast as Professor Prout. He remarks that while the composers have kept pace with the evolution of other leading musical instruments, with the organ this is very far from being the case. In short, Mr. Peterson declares that there is only one organ composer. By this of course he does not mean that Mendelssohn, Rheinberger, Widor, Guilmant (in his own French way) are of no account. In pianoforte literature Haydn does not suffer when compared with Bach; nor Schubert when compared with Mozart; nor Schumann or Brahms with Beethoven; nor Chopin with Schubert; all are pre-eminent in some particular branch; they have their own mission, their own place, and need not fear comparison or rivalry. But among organ composers there is no name which can be mentioned in the same breath with that of John Sebastian Bach. He dominates the instrument and its literature;

it is his face which looks out from among the dusty pipes of a noble old organ. His fugues and toccatas are the autocrats of the desk; the memory of his feet makes a Holy Land of the pedal board, and a pilgrim might feel a stronger influence as he touched the keys or handled the draw-stops of the old organ in the St. Thomas Kirche, in Leipzig, than when playing "Batti batti" on Mozart's little piano in the museum at Salzburg. After this panegyric Mr. Peterson proceeds to deal with the popular notion that the organ is not an "expressive" instrument. As a matter of fact, the organ treated in a proper way is one of the most expressive instruments, although its means of expression are essentially different from those of the harmonium, the pianoforte, or the violin. If any justification of this contention were wanted, it could be found in the fact that no instrument—with the possible exception of the violin—betrays so instantaneously any trace of vulgarity in the artist.

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The Orchestral Association *Gazette* has a note which ought to be of interest to the conductors who imagine that a vigorous sawing of the air in all directions is the best way to keep singers and players together. I read that a short time back a conductor (not a native) who was rehearsing a new work of his own composition, stopped the orchestra several times in vain to get a passage to go together, his system of beating being that which delights in reducing innumerable divisions of beats to innumerable sub-divisions, so that the stick at last assumes the form something between forked lightning and a catherine wheel in full blaze. Finally he exclaimed, "I really can't beat every note!" "Don't try," responded a chorus of voices from the four corners of the orchestra. He looked up astonished, and then tried a plain square four in a bar. The orchestra went like one man.

**

The *Lute* discusses once more the old, old question of whether we are a musical nation. Our contemporary declares emphatically that we are. Moreover, everybody admits that we are—except the Germans. The Germans still hug the delusion that they are heaven's chosen, forgetting that all their great composers are underground. At the present time they have not one single genius, though they have crowds of turgid and tedious writers. But they have an advantage over us in the matter of being able to command a hearing almost anywhere. It is as everybody knows, very difficult for a British musician to get a hearing, whether as composer or executant. The late Alfred Cellier is an instance in point. His *Gray's Elegy* has only been performed two or three times. But it remains a masterpiece of inspiration none the less. On the other hand, the naïf Teuton comes over here with his violin, or overture, his crack-jaw name, his long hair and his imperturbable confidence, and straightway he is pitchforked by the agents—themselves mostly foreigners—into a concert, where, if he is not very bad, he gets a start, and one engagement leads to another, until he becomes celebrated. His relations at Schweinsruhe read with pride of his success, reflecting the while that he could attract no

audience at the local town of Eselbad. Thus they have the best reason for despising our musical taste. The idea of indulgence towards strangers upon which we act a little too freely, they cannot understand. The attitude ordinarily adopted by them towards foreigners is one of hardly disguised hostility. Well, well! we can afford to smile. Let them enjoy protection in their music as in their commerce. They can always come and live over here and get the benefit of free trade in both.

H.

Nonconformist Church Organs.

CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHAPEL, RHYL.

Built by Messrs. Wadsworth & Bros.

Great Organ.

Open Diapason	8 feet.
Harmonic Flute	8 "
Dulciana	8 "
Gamba (grooved)	8 "
Principal	4 "
Wald Flute	4 "
Grave mixture	(2 ranks)
Trumpet	8 feet.
Clarionet	8 "

Swell Organ.

Lieblich Bourdon	16 "
Open Diapason	8 "
Lieblich Gedackt	8 "
Salicional (grooved)	8 "
Voix Celeste	8 "
Gemshorn	4 "
Mixture	(2 ranks)
Horn	8 feet.
Oboe	8 "

Pedal Organ.

Open Diapason	16 "
Bourdon	16 "

Couplers.

Swell to Pedal.	Great to Pedal.
Swell to Pedal.	Swell Superoctave.
Great Superoctave.	
Combination Pedals—3 to Great. 3 to Swell.	

FARNHAM WESLEYAN CIRCUIT CHOIR FESTIVAL.

A VERY successful Festival was given by this choir in Grosvenor Road Church, Aldershot. Mr. Curry, who has worked with great enthusiasm in the cause, conducted with much ability. The choir numbered in all about 120 voices, and was most materially assisted by a string band composed of both military and civil instrumentalists, who for their efforts well deserved all the praise that could be bestowed upon them. The first portion of the Festival was of a general character, but the second was solely devoted to the production of a sacred oratorio, entitled *Christ and His Soldiers* (Farmer). The proceedings opened with the hearty singing of the hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," this being followed by prayer and the chanting by the congregation of the Pater Noster. And then the audience settled down to the enjoyment of the musical menu that was to be provided for them. Miss Florence Hunt, Mr. Russell Romney, Miss Gracie Robbins were the soloists, all of whom were in good voice. The choruses went with much spirit and reflected much credit on the singers and their conductor.

Expression.

THERE are few subjects connected with music that have been written about in some form or other oftener and at great length, than that which I shall endeavour to treat in this article. To my mind it is so overwhelming in its importance that whatever his skill and knowledge, any writer may well feel a hesitancy in discussing it. That expression in playing has always been considered a matter of much weight, is very evident, from the fact that scores of the greatest musicians have written and spoken more or less fully and emphatically upon it. I write this with little hope of saying anything original, but rather to bring once more before my readers a subject on which too much cannot be said, and on which all that has been said cannot be too often repeated.

Playing (or singing) *without* expression is like a body without a soul, and to sensitive musical people is a caricature or worse, a veritable Frankenstein in art. If more performers could but know and remember this, it would be much better for them and others, for they might possibly endeavour to improve. Playing *with* expression means nothing more or less than a "*pressing out*"—getting out of the music all there is in it. Before this can be done the performer must have a clear conception of the music, both as to form and structure. This again presupposes a certain amount of natural intelligence on the part of any one attempting a musical work. The dull, heavy, apathetic person of whom it may be truly said—

"The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus,"

must let music alone, and I am happy to say most of them do. If teachers do happen to have such pupils they must do all for them possible of course. They (the pupils) may at least be taught to observe the "*pianos*" and "*fortes*" and "*crescendos*" correctly, but true expression can never be taught where the necessary mental qualifications do not exist, any more than the oak will develop from an acorn from which the germ has decayed.

Any one essaying to interpret a piece of music must have first of all a correct conception of the music. (An adequate technic is taken for granted—nothing can be done without it.) The feelings and emotions will prompt expression more or less correct and poetic in proportion to the degree of depth, fervency and spirituality of the emotions, and I may add the quickness of the powers of the imagination. The majority of music pupils, coming as they do from the families of the educated and better classes, possess in a greater or less degree the sensitive and emotional nature, and have powers of imagination more or less easily quickened into action. These are the pupils who need development, and usually when a wise course is taken richly repay the extra work. And it is in the cultivation of the conditions mentioned above that the most charming part of a teacher's work lies, and only from such cultivation will the most artistic results ensue.

There are few teachers but would feel unjustly accused were it intimated that they did not teach

expression in playing, and yet very few do—in the right way. The result too often is a number of outward visible signs—not of an inward spiritual grace—but of something entirely different. There is nothing that is so nearly a burlesque than many of the attempts to impress hearers that the playing is expressive. Who is there that has not seen a player swaying head and body, waving hands and arms, making exaggerated movements of the fingers and wrist, a rolling or closing of the eyes as if in ecstasy, playing alarming "*fortes*" and shadowy "*pianos*" in quick succession. All these capers are purely external and unnecessary matters and have nothing whatever to do with expressive playing.

There is a trick of Hindoo jugglers in which the operator is wrapped round and round with ribbons until nothing is visible but his head and feet. Afterwards the ribbon is "*reeled off*" again. In listening to a great deal of piano playing (and also singing, acting, and elocution), I am reminded of the Hindoo and the ribbon. The performers simply "*reel off*" what has been laboriously laid on by others. Expression in playing must be the result of right feeling, noble and elevating thoughts, intelligent conceptions of what the music means—all this crowned with a becoming humility—in other words, true expression can only come *from within*.

It may not be out of place to remark here, that young children, and even young men and women, with the necessary conditions fulfilled, are never able to play with the expressiveness of older people, for the reason that the greatest depths of passion and sentiment can only be attained by those who have felt the greatest joy and greatest grief of their life, and these do not often come to the young. Of course it would not do to postpone the development of sentiment on this account for obvious reasons.

To my mind nothing can be so conducive to a cultivation of the higher emotions as the contemplation and study of beauty in all its forms. The world is full of beauty, yet how few see it or notice it. To Peter Bell in Wordsworth's poem—

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

There are many like Peter Bell, with all around them sometimes, for no other reason that the beauty has never been pointed out to them perhaps. The teacher must often urge the student to study the beauty of nature. The sunset is equally beautiful, whether in balmy June, or whether seen through the tracery of the bare twigs and branches of the trees in winter. Nature is accessible to all, though cases may arise where the teacher must quicken the imagination of pupils by vivid description of the beauty of sea, mountain, and waterfall. In the same way the pupil's thoughts must from time to time be turned to pictures, sculpture, architecture and poetry; in fact, to everything in which the spirit of beauty dwells. Chief of all agents for cultivating and developing taste is music itself. If orchestral and choral concerts are within reach, students must on no account miss hearing them. In remote country places, where recitals cannot be had, the teacher must play and play

often the most expressive music he can—music suggesting nobility, sweetness, contentment, happiness, grief, joy, and the like. Symphonies and large orchestral works may be studied as piano duets, and the pupil must notice the entry of the different instruments. The full score must be used in such practice, however. Besides this the teacher must again set the pupils' powers of imagination to work by describing other sublime forms of music; for instance, that of the massive cathedral with its wonderful pillars and arches and "dim religious light," and so describe it that the pupil may in his heart hear the "organ blow to the sweet-toned choir below," not forgetting to mention the many historical and musical associations of the grand cathedrals. The music of a military band is often charming under certain circumstances, for instance, if it can be heard as one floats down a stream with the high wooded banks topped with a castle, or cathedral, or palace (or all three, as in one place I know). The music of a full chime of bells at evening has a peculiar charm of its own. Many other things will naturally suggest themselves to the progressive and educated teacher. In fact nothing must be left undone to stimulate the imagination and stir the emotional nature of those studying music with any sincerity of aim; and as they grow gradually to see beauty in everything, in art and nature, their whole being will glow with genuine lofty feeling, high aspirations, ambition and noble resolve. Until this condition is reached, expressive (and, incidentally, *impressive*) playing need not be expected.

It may be asked, When is all this to be done? Well, it is begun at the first lesson and continued so long as possible, or necessary, and it does not necessarily have to be done at the lessons, but at other times when the pupils meet together for practice, reading, or for recitals. The teacher whose interest ceases with the lessons is unworthy. It may be objected that a teacher is paid to teach piano, not feeling or sentiment. To this I will only say that teachers are not to forget these words of a poet:

"How empty learning and how vain is art,
But as they mend the life and guide the heart."

Piano playing of itself will do neither one nor the other.

I have not spoken of the effect of religion on the emotions and feelings, and consequently the ability to play or sing with great expression, partly because it is a phrase of the subject which could easily require a separate treatment, and partly because its wonderful influence really needs no proof.

RETIREMENT OF DR. E. J. HOPKINS.

SUNDAY, May 8th, was an interesting day at the Temple Church, for Dr. Hopkins presided at the organ for the last time.

It was on May 7th, 1843, that this distinguished musician, now one of the oldest of our English organists, played his first probationary service at the Temple, and in the following October he was elected titular organist to the two Temples. The fact may not be generally known that Hopkins' great rival at the period was George Cooper. Both were probationers, and each had a church of his own. Their respective rectors protested against the arrange-

ment by which their work was thus neglected, and Cooper preferred to retain his post at St. Sepulchre's, while Hopkins stuck to the Temple, and eventually was definitely appointed to the post. Now, within a few months of eighty years of age, he relinquishes the organ loft to a younger man, although he is still in full enjoyment of health and faculties, and proposes indeed to devote the first few months of his leisure to the preparation of a new edition of that "History of the Organ" which for more than forty years has been the standard book upon the subject. Meanwhile he retains at the Temple the title of honorary organist, and, thanks to the liberality of the Benchers, he will also enjoy for the rest of his life his full salary by way of pension.

The Temple Church was crowded at the morning service. It need hardly be said that the music was almost exclusively from the pen of the veteran composer. At the two celebrations his Morning and Evening Services in A were used, the anthems being his setting of the text "The King shall rejoice" (originally composed for the Thanksgiving service on the recovery of the Prince of Wales), and "God who commanded the Light" while the hymns "Nearer, my God, to Thee" and "Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us," were likewise sung to the Doctor's music.

In the course of his sermon Canon Ainger referred in feeling and very appropriate terms to Dr. Hopkins, saying he admired him for his invariable self-repression and subserviency of musical display to reverence and devotion, making their church as far as possible a little heaven below.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 18th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

HIGHBURY.—An enjoyable concert was given in the Lecture Hall of the Park Presbyterian Church by the Choral Society. The artistes were Miss Alice A. Simons, Mr. Montague Bourell; violinist, Mr. J. H. Norman; pianoforte, Miss Florence Meen. Mr. John Cook conducted, and Mr. Fred Meen accompanied.

STOKE NEWINGTON.—A new organ has recently been erected in Devonshire Square Baptist Church, and a dedication service was held on Thursday, May 5th, when an organ recital was given by Mr. Charles E. Smith, organist of Regent's Park Church, and was attentively listened to by a large audience. Mr. Smith's solos included Batiste's well-known "Andante in G," and Bach's short "Prelude and Fugue in C," which were specially favoured by his hearers, and were played with a taste and expression well deserving their approval. Indeed, the audience by their loud applause repeatedly showed their appreciation of Mr. Smith's skilful and masterly playing. Mr. William C. Gribble, of St. Margaret's, Westminster, sang two solos with great feeling and expression, his rendering of "But the Lord is Mindful" calling forth a well-deserved encore. The Rev. G. P. McKay gave a short and very apt address upon music and the service of praise; and during the collection the choir gave a very spirited rendering of Elvey's anthem, "Rejoice in the Lord." The Doxology and Benediction closed a very enjoyable evening.

PROVINCIAL.

BELFAST.—At the recent Musical Festival a choir conducted by Mr. Samuel Leighton, choirmaster of May Street Presbyterian Church, won the second prize in Class II. (choirs numbering not less than twenty nor more than fifty voices).

NEWTON HEATH, NEAR MANCHESTER.—On Sunday, May 8th, the Culcheth Sunday School Anniversary Services were held, when sermons were preached in the morning and evening by the Rev. W. Stephen, of London; and in the afternoon an address by Councillor James Middleton, of Oldham. Special hymns were sung by the scholars and choir, including "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "There is a Happy Land," by W. H. Jude. The choir also very effectively rendered the anthems "Lift up your Heads" (Hopkins), "I will sing of Thy Power" (Sullivan), "The Radiant Morn" (Woodward), and "The Marvellous Work" (Haydn's *Creation*), the solo of which was admirably rendered by Miss M. C. Thorpe, who also sang Barnard's song, "The Trust of Little Children." Mr. W. D. Bailey, the Organist and Choirmaster, conducted, and Mr. Edwin Holt very ably presided at the organ. The singing fully maintained the reputation which the school and choir have so long enjoyed in connection with these anniversaries; one notable feature being the magnificent effect of the congregational singing of the old Methodist tunes *Cranbrook* and *Diadem* at the evening service. The collections amounted to £62 11s.

NORTHAMPTON.—The annual meeting of the Queen's Road Wesleyan Chapel Choir was held recently, the President (Rev. Joel Peters) presiding. The Secretary submitted the balance-sheet for the year, the receipts being upwards of £26. After paying for music and various other expenses the year closed with a balance due to the treasurer of 11s. 10d. The report having been unanimously carried, the officers were elected. A resolution was passed unanimously that the choir attend the annual festival of the Nonconformist Choir Union at the Crystal Palace on June 16th, and that they compete in class A. The president and vice-president very cordially accepted an invitation to attend with this choir. It was also decided to compete in the local Eisteddfod in connection with the Sunday School Union. Arrangements were made for the annual choir festival, and very hearty thanks were accorded to the conductor (Mr. Jos. Rogers) and the organist (Mr. C. Tysoe). Mr. G. Clements was the recipient of "The Life and Reminiscences of Sir George Elvey" in recognition of his valuable services, and he was very cordially thanked by the conductor. The choir consists of upwards of fifty members, and possesses a library of music worth over £70. The President expressed his hearty appreciation of the services of the choir, and said that before he came to Northampton he heard a good deal about the choir, but he found that the reports were fully justified by the manner in which the choir acquitted themselves in the services of the church.

PEMBROKE.—A new organ, erected in Tabernacle Congregational Church by Messrs. Conacher and Co., was opened on April 27th by Mr. E. Minshall, from whose specification the instrument was built. In the afternoon the Mayor (J. C. Froyne, Esq.) formally unlocked the organ, and was presented with a silver key. A service followed, when the Rev. A. Lloyd Williams, B.A., of Tenby, preached an excellent sermon. A recital and concert formed the programme for the evening, when the Chapel was packed, including the aisles. The choir, under the direction of Mr. R. S. Thomas, gave a vigorous rendering of "Fixed in His Everlasting Seat" and "Sing unto God." Solos were tastefully given by Miss Muriel Davies, Miss Longyear, Miss Williams, and Mr. Canton, the last two especially meeting with a hearty reception. Mrs. Cattley accompanied with excellent judgment.

WESTGATE-ON-SEA.—On April 28th, a social gathering was held in connection with Christ Church, the

principal event of the evening being a presentation to Mrs. Blandford, who has recently retired from the position of organist, a position which she held for fifteen years. The presentation was made by the Pastor, the Rev. Samuel King, who referred in glowing terms to the work done by Mrs. Blandford, not only as organist, but in the church generally, and also in the Sunday School. The presentation consisted of an illuminated address appropriately framed and a purse of gold. The address was as follows:—"Christ Church, Westgate-on-Sea. We, the members of the church, choir and congregation, desire hereby to express our loving appreciation of the services rendered by Mrs. Blandford, through the many years she held the position of organist in our midst, as also of the great ability and unselfish devotion with which she has superintended the Psalmody of the church. In asking her acceptance of the accompanying purse of gold, we assure her that there are those among us upon whose lives her influence will never be forgotten. We thank God that we have been privileged to associate with her in ways of Christian service, and much rejoice that we may anticipate a continuance of her kindly co-operation, although she has felt obliged to relinquish her duties as organist of the church. April, 1898." Mr. Bridgman Smith, (an old member of the choir) and Mr. Ward, both expressed the great pleasure it gave them to see honour done to one so deserving of it. The Rev. T. Blandford, in acknowledging the gift on behalf of his wife, said he was quite taken by surprise, and considering that previous presentations had been made to Mrs. Blandford, he had not thought that there was room for a further one; he thanked all those who had subscribed towards it, and expressed the great satisfaction that he was sure his wife felt as well as himself at such a recognition of her past services. After a few further words from Mr. A. H. Blandford, on behalf of his mother, the social portion of the evening was continued.

WORTHING.—On May 4th, at the Baptist Church, the sacred cantata, "Esther, the Beautiful Queen," was performed under the direction of Mr. Alfred W. Fisher, L.R.A.M., the organist of the church. The chorus, numbering about forty-five voices, had obviously received assiduous training at the hands of Mr. Fisher, a fact that was evidenced by the unequivocal success which attended the rendering of the cantata; the soloists were all in capital voice, and bestowed every justice upon the music. The principal characters in the cantata were sustained as follows: Esther (the Queen), Miss N. Holden; Ahasuerus (the King), Mr. F. Pierce; Haman (Overseer of the Realm), Mr. Peto; Zeresh (Haman's wife), Miss M. Binstead; Mordecai, Mr. R. Grinyer; Chief Maid of Honour, Miss F. Fairchild; Hegai, Mr. A. T. Morecraft; Prophetess, Miss Reading; Harbonah, Mr. H. Frost; and Narrator, the Rev. A. W. Leighton Barker, the Pastor of the Church, who supplied the connective readings. Mr. Fisher conducted with marked ability, and the accompaniments were played by Miss Staygle (pianoforte) and Mr. C. F. Muller (organ).

COLONIAL.

MELBOURNE.—On Monday evening, March 21st, at the "Central Methodist Mission" (Wesley Church) Lonsdale Street, Caleb Simper's Cantata "*The Rolling Seasons*" was rendered by the full strength of the Mission Choir. The soloists were Mrs. Statters, Miss Marcham, Miss Aggie Finnie, Messrs. Beadle and Waldron. Mr. W. R. Bennetts, junior, the Musical Director of the Mission, officiating in the dual capacity of Organist and Conductor. The work itself was received with enthusiasm by the great audience present, and in response to a general desire for its early repetition, it was repeated as part of a Sunday evening service.

Correspondence.

TONIC SOL-FA ORGANISTS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—Referring to "Open Diapason's" letter in your last issue, I quite agree with him that "everything is against a sol-fa player." I do not condemn the system by any means, as it is most useful in teaching children the elements of music; but unfortunately many thus taught never attempt to master the old notation, and consequently find they are unable to study the majority of the works of the great masters, as only a few of the Oratorios are published in the sol-fa notation.

I cannot conceive a purely "sol-fa player" being termed an organist, bearing in mind the fact that the whole realm of sterling organ music is as a sealed book to such. I should very much like to see the great Fugues of Bach, or the works of Guilman and Rheinberger published in sol-fa notation; they would certainly be most interesting studies for our sol-fa friends.

I would strongly advise "Open Diapason," if he has not already done so, to take up the study of the old notation. He will, I am confident, never regret it, and it will most assuredly extend his knowledge of every branch of musical art, if conscientiously pursued.

Another serious hindrance to the pure sol-faist, who wishes to obtain a diploma at any of the recognised institutions (other than the Tonic Sol-fa College), would be the paper work, which must be written in old notation, so that undoubtedly the "pure sol-faist" has indeed a rough time of it.—Yours faithfully,

A. R. C. O.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—I have read with much interest "Open Diapason's" letter on the above subject in your last issue. I, too, like your correspondent, am a Tonic Sol-fa player, having played from that method—though not entirely—for very many years. I was really brought up on and nurtured in the system from my boyhood (my family being ardent Tonic Sol-faists), and it has never really presented any difficulties to me by way of playing from it. But I am well up in Old Notation as well, and to my mind it is certainly next to impossible for a player to advance much, if any, if he can only play from Sol-fa. As your correspondent truly remarks, "Everything is against the Sol-fa player," or in other words, there is so very little instrumental music published in Tonic Sol-fa. Messrs. Curwen and Sons have certainly published some few pieces, but the list is by no means a long one. But although able to play from both notations, I certainly much prefer the Tonic Sol-fa, if I can get it, as I find I can read so much quicker, and also memorise a piece quicker and more thoroughly than from the Staff Notation.

I shall now look forward to the pages of your valuable journal, as I am interested greatly in this subject, believing there are many Tonic Sol-fa players who will favour us with their experiences.—Very faithfully yours.

"BOURDON."

To the Editor of the NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent "Open Diapason" has started an enquiry I for one would be very glad to see fully answered. There are more organists and harmonium players using the Tonic Solfa notation than is generally supposed. I used it exclusively myself up to within the last twelve months, and I know of three other organists who do the same; but owing to the difficulty your correspondent mentions, viz., the scarcity of instrumental music in the notation, I am now studying the old notation. The only Solfa keyboard music as far I know is "The Harmonium Companion" (five books), "Liber Musicus" (four

books), and a few translations of classical pieces by Bach, Beethoven, etc., for the pianoforte, all published by Curwen. I have always had to translate the instrumental parts of the cantatas, anthems, etc., performed at our place, and it was to save labour of this description that compelled me to learn the usual notation. It seems very short-sighted of our publishers, who never think of issuing anthems, etc., in the old notation without the organ part, to do so in the Solfa editions, as they not only make it next to impossible for the Solfa organist to render the anthem properly, but deny the singer the opportunity of following the organ part as well as his own, a privilege given unreservedly to the old notation reader. It is perfectly ridiculous to print such stupidities as "twenty bars symphony ending so and so," a notice which of course sets the singer on thorns as to when he has got to come in, and making him nervous lest he should manage to let the few indicated notes slip, and thus be late with the lead; the reader of the staff notation at the same time being perfectly at rest, and enjoying the rendering of the instrumental part—just because his publisher lets him.

I think if our publishers could see their way clear to issue their Solfa copies note for note with the Old Notation it would be greatly appreciated. I know the Solfa is generally cheaper, but nobody asked for it to be so, and I think Solfaists (players and singers alike) would be thankful for the change, although their copies might cost more. I possess one anthem in this form, Prout's "Behold my servant," published in a series called "The Lute" at the same price as the O.N. copy, and this is I think how they all ought to be.

I trust to see more on this subject in the columns of your delightful little journal, and I hope with "Open Diapason" that we Tonic Solfa Organists may come to know one another and reap mutual benefit thereby.—Yours very truly,

"NOTA BENE."

HOW TO PREPARE CHORAL MUSIC.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—The question raised by "A Beginner" in your last issue reveals a difficulty which is encountered by many others besides those who are just entering upon the duties of a choirmaster. Results are often reached by various ways, all of which may be excellent, and, apart from general principles which must be observed to lead to success, different conductors have different methods. The subject of choir-training is such a wide one, however, that I fear to do more here than offer a suggestion to our young friend. Let him communicate with an organist who has had some years of experience, and who has produced good work, with a view to being permitted to attend his choir practice, as an object lesson. At such a practice he should be present as a listener only, carefully taking notes of the proceedings, and asking any needful questions afterwards. I feel sure that few men of any standing and ability would refuse an application of this kind, and personally I regard it as a duty and a pleasure to assist those who are crying, "Give us of your oil," that they may kindle their lamps. The idea may be taken for what it is worth, and is put forward with an earnest desire to place the training of our Nonconformist singers on a higher level of competency.—Yours faithfully,

CHARLES EDWIN SMITH,

Organist and Choir-master, Regent's Park Chapel.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—Your correspondent "A Beginner" would find it best to work at several pieces at a time. To "peg away" at one piece till thoroughly mastered would be tedious in the extreme, and probably drive some of his singers from the choir. They must have variety for

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Coro allegro alla Marcia. Ernest H. Smith, F.R.C.O.

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